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# Inside Information

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**INSIDE INFORMATION** is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Individual items are sent electronically throughout the month to offices on the agricultural information network. These items are then printed at the end of the month for distribution to all offices, including those which do not have access to electronic mail. Any items, comments or inquiries should be sent to Denver Browning, Editor, Information Technology Management Staff, Office of Public Affairs, Room 536-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send to Browning's FTS2000 (AT&T) mailbox !A13DBROWNING, or call at 202-720-2058. Communicators with USDA Agencies, Land Grant Universities and State Departments of Agriculture are encouraged to submit items to the editor for inclusion in both the electronic and printed versions.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Although timely in the electronic version, some job announcements may reach you too late in hard copy due to the shortness of deadlines. Our policy is to include all electronic items in the end-of-month hard copy.



**JOINT NETC AND ACE CONFERENCES TO BE HELD MAY 8-12 IN MIAMI**

Mark your calendars for May 8-12, 1993, to attend an international meeting combining the National Extension Technology Conference (NETC) and Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE) International meeting. The Intercontinental Hotel on Biscayne Bay in Miami is the setting for this first-ever combined meeting.

For a single registration fee, participants can attend sessions of two meetings running concurrently in one of America's most exciting and culturally diverse cities. Cost for the four-day conference, which includes most meals, is \$250 for registration before February 15. Cost after that date is \$295. Hotel rates are \$91 for a single and \$102 for a double. Spouses should also register in advance of the conference and will only be charged for events attended.

The NETC Conference theme is "Navigating the Information Ocean" and the ACE theme is "Discovering New Worlds."

The NETC committee is now accepting submissions for preconference workshops, session presentations of between 15-45 minutes, hands-on demonstrations of applications, or a display booth. If you need ideas for session topics, a list of possible subjects can be provided. Those interested in participating should submit their proposed presentation type and title by December 14 to Thomas R. Hintz.

For more information on NETC, contact Hintz at the University of Florida, IFAS Computer Network, Building 120, Room 205, Gainesville, FL 32611. Telephone is 904-392-5180 and FAX is 904-392-5857. E-mail addresses are BITNET (NETC93@IFASGNV) or INTERNET (NETC93@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU).

ACE members interested in participating should contact their SIG chair with ideas and proposals for sessions, speakers, or pre-conference workshops. Deadline for submission of ideas is November 15. For more information contact: Donald W. Poucher, University of Florida, IFAS Educational Media & Services, 1021 McCarty Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611. Telephone is 904-392-0437 and FAX is 904-392-3595. E-mail addresses are BITNET (INFO@IFASGNV) or INTERNET (INFO@GNV.IFAS.UFL.EDU).

**USDA TO TELEVISION AGRICULTURE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER**

USDA has announced plans to televise key sessions of its 69th annual farm outlook conference over satellite in early December.

The "Agriculture Outlook '93" conference will take place December 1-3 at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. Nearly 100 speakers will forecast the outlook for farmers and consumers in 1993 and discuss the longer term prospects for U.S. agriculture in this decade.

USDA plans three separate televised transmissions of the conference on December 1, 3, and 10. Satellite viewers will need a dish that receives C band, and should tune in channel 9 of the Galaxy 6 satellite on C band all three days. A test and tone will precede each broadcast.

The opening morning of the conference will be transmitted December 1, from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. est. Topics will include the 1993 economic and farm outlook and longer term prospects in light of the many changes occurring here and abroad. Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan is scheduled to make the opening address and hold a live news conference at 10:30 a.m. est.

On Thursday, December 3, from 8:30 a.m. to noon est, USDA will transmit the closing conference session, featuring the latest advice on nutrition. Speakers will discuss USDA's new "food guide pyramid" and how it is being used, as well as new government and industry programs to inform consumers about diet and health.

On Thursday, December 10, from 3-4 p.m. est, USDA will transmit a special broadcast highlighting the detailed forecasts for major farm commodities presented at the conference.

For more information call 202-720-3050.



## **NAGC'S TOTAL QUALITY COMMUNICATIONS SCHOOL TO OPEN**

The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) will run its annual communications school January 13-16 at the Old Colony Inn in Alexandria, Virginia.

Joe Barnes, conference chair, said NAGC designed its annual communications school around Total Quality Communications to address the unique needs of government communicators. A new federal administration will affect communicators throughout the country, and we'll all need this training.

He said the school takes its title from the total quality management movement -- targeting your effort. It offers writing, editing, management and specialized professional skills tracks to federal, state and local government communicators. This is the 17th year NAGC has offered training exclusively for government communicators.

The school contains general and breakout sessions featuring top speakers. Nina Tottenberg of National Public Radio will keynote the school. Barnes said the school will offer panel discussions focusing on philosophical and ethical questions, challenges of reductions in force, budget cuts and increased work demands.

The school includes presentations of coveted Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards, that recognize excellence in written, taped, designed, filmed, photographed and published government information products.

A highlight is presentation of NAGC's "Government Communicator of the Year Award." The award has previously gone to a single person.

For the first time, NAGC has selected three distinguished communicators to receive its highest award to non-members. Chosen for their work in public safety, the winners are Sara and James Brady for their efforts to control distribution of hand guns; and John Walsh, producer of "America's Most Wanted," for his work in tracking down criminals.

Included in topics classes will deal with:

- raising writing standards through editorial review,
- learning from a top radio station news and public services director how they select the public service announcements they use from the hundreds they get,
- determining how to contract for video services,
- learning strategies to improve ways public affairs officers promote their agencies,
- ways to cope with news media during crisis situations and more.

Howard Paine, former art director at NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, provides a yardstick to judge publications.

Another highlight will be presentation of Blue Pencil and Gold Screen awards. Government communicators entered 678 of their best products in the competition this year.

The conference ends with a special state and local session aimed at identifying the three main issues for the 1990s and how they affect communicators.

Registration is \$550 for non NAGC members, \$625 if mailed after December 18 or paid on-site. Make checks payable to NAGC, 669 S.Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Telephone 703-519-3902.



## **USDA-ARS BIOLOGIST WINS AWARD FROM POPULAR SCIENCE MAGAZINE**

For the third time in five years, POPULAR SCIENCE magazine has picked a USDA discovery for its fifth annual "Best of What's New Award."

Dr. Betty Ishida, research biologist at the Agricultural Research Service Western Regional Center in Albany, California, won the award for her test-tube experiments with tomatoes. She turned cherry tomato calyxes from green and leaf-like to red, plump and juicy. Calyxes are the star-shaped clusters at the top of the tomato where it joins the stem.

Ishida's finding brings scientists a step closer to discovering the mechanism that triggers tomato ripening. Such research could lead to high-tech indoor farming in the 21st Century where growers could tend and harvest huge vats of billions of fruit and vegetable cells, such as tomato cells, for paste, catsup, soup or salsa.



POPULAR SCIENCE's annual awards are given to the 100 top scientific achievements, products and technologies as determined by the editors of the magazine. A 24-page cover story about the awards will appear in the December 1992 issue.

Ishida was honored on Tuesday, November 10, at a display and awards luncheon at the Tavern on the Green restaurant in New York City's Central Park.

ARS' Dr. Stephen L. Buckmann of the Carl Hayden Bee Research Center in Tucson, Arizona, was selected in 1989. He was the first to use miniature bar codes to monitor activities of honeybees.

The first ARS winners of the award were Dr. Tyrone L. Vigo and Joseph Bruno, research chemists at the Southern Regional Research Center. They discovered polytherm, a process that makes cloth respond to changes in temperature. Clothing made from polytherm can warm you when it's cold and cool you when it's hot.



#### USDA'S SCS BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE WINS THIRD PLACE NAGC AWARD

"SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION NEWS," a bimonthly periodical produced by USDA's Soil Conservation Service, has received a third place (tied) award in NAGC's Blue Pencil Awards. The award was in the category of Periodical for Technical or Professional Audience -- Four Colors.

The magazine staff includes Leslie Wilder, editor; Paul DuMont and Mary Jo Armstrong, associate editors; and Kim Berry-Brown and Ted Kupelian as contributing editors.

The award will be presented during the annual National Association of Government Communicators School in January.



#### USDA-OPA PUBLISHES NEW "HOW TO GET INFORMATION FROM USDA"

The latest edition of "How to Get Information from the United States Department of Agriculture" has been published.

The 70-page publication, produced by USDA's Office of Public Affairs, is divided into 5 sections: USDA Agency Index (Acronyms), USDA Public Affairs and Agency Information Offices, USDA Organizational Chart, USDA Information Staff Index, and USDA Subject Index.

For those who have FTS2000MAIL, an abridged version of "How to Get Information" is available in a shared folder in the system. The abridged version also is available on the CID (Computerized Information Delivery) Service and USDA's Ag NewsFAX.

Copies are limited. Those who requested a single free copy offered by the INSIDE INFORMATION editor in May, were automatically sent a copy of the updated version. If you were not on the previous request list, for a single copy, write to Denver Browning, USDA, Office of Public Affairs, Room 536-A, Washington, DC 20250. Telephone is 202-720-2058.



#### OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS HAS WRITER-EDITOR POSITION AVAILABLE

The Publishing Division in USDA's Office of Public Affairs has announced an opening for a GS-1082-11/12, GM-1082-13 writer-editor. Announcement Number is 13-3-42.

Duties include writing and rewriting popular publications, fact sheets, and other informational materials intended for the general public or for specialized audiences.

Qualifications include 52 weeks of specialized experience which has equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the duties of the position and which is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled.

Applicants will be considered from all sources.

To apply, contact: Norita Fortune (202-720-4802), USDA, Office of Personnel, Personnel Operations Division, Room 12-W Administration Building, 14th & Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250. Closing date is December 2.



## USDA'S CID SERVICE CONTINUES ITS UPWARD GROWTH TREND

Wouldn't you like to have an information tool that would deliver almost nine million lines of data (about 161,255 pages) at just over four cents per page to the public? Well, you do, says Russell Forte. It's called the CID (Computerized Information Delivery) Service. Forte is USDA's coordinator of the service.

Last fiscal year, commercial users of the service retrieved 8,869,000 lines of data at a total loading cost to USDA agencies of only \$38,329. That doesn't count the 2,704,000 lines used by federal and state government.

USDA agencies loaded 47% more information in FY 92 over 91 and 67% more over FY 87. The cost to do that increased only 28% over FY 91. However, that cost was 38% LESS than in FY 87.

And that's using 1985 dollars, now worth about 80 cents. Martin Marietta hasn't raised prices to the public since we started in 1985. They've lowered the cost to government about 60% during that time.

USDA now has five fiscal years of CIDS USDA use and cost reports to compare. They show a steady trend up in use and down in cost.

These figures show that CID's commercial use grew by just under 5% in FY 92 over 91, but 117% over FY 87. That's less than the usual spectacular growth we're used to seeing year to year (28% between the previous two years, for example) but significant growth for distribution of information to the public.

It's also only the first cut, since news and information vendors on the service re-distribute the information to unknown thousands of their own users.

Government use was actually down almost 8% over FY 91, probably because we took Ag a.m. off the service. But federal and state government use was up 259% over FY 87.

For more informaton contact Forte at 202-720-5505 or !A13RFORTE.



## SECOND EDITION OF ACE COMMUNICATOR'S HANDBOOK IS PUBLISHED

Making any government or university communicator look, sound, and read better is the goal of "The Communicator's Handbook: Techniques and Technology," written by members of the international association, Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE).

"USDA and university professionals today are faced with communicating complex and controversial issues to many diverse audiences. This book can help you do that job better, no matter what the medium," says Patricia Calvert, editor of the handbook. Calvert is deputy director of USDA's Extension Service Communication, Information and Technology.

True to its title, The Communicator's Handbook covers basic techniques for communicating through newsletters, news releases, and other print publications, in radio and television interviews and on videotape; and visually with chapters covering graphic design, posters, exhibits and photography, and slide-tape presentations.

Other chapters cover emerging technology, such as USDA's Computerized Information Delivery (CID) Service, desktop publishing, teleconferencing, the role of computers in education and training, and interactive video. Crisis management, strategic communication planning, and media relations also are among the 20 chapters in the 314-page book, which has extensive photographs and illustrations.

"It's comprehensive, easy to understand, and it's versatile. Many universities are using it for training Extension staff, or in volunteer or agent training seminars. At least 10 communications and journalism schools also have adopted it for classrooms, and international communicators are finding it useful, too," Calvert notes.



The Communicator's Handbook costs \$26.95, postpaid, USA, and is available through Maupin House Publishing, P.O. Box 90148, Gainesville, FL 32607. Telephone is 904-336-9290. Per copy price for 10 or more books is \$14.95 plus shipping and handling. Payment by check, purchase order, or Master Card/VISA. International orders are shipped surface unless air freight is requested and payment arrangements made.



## COSDA ELECTS NEW OFFICERS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN GEORGIA

Diane Baedeker, communicators officer for the Massachusetts Department of Food & Agriculture, was elected president of the Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture (COSDA) at the association's annual meeting.

She succeeds Lisa Ray Grovenstein, press and consumer services director for the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and who hosted the annual conference and workshop in Atlanta Nov. 1-4.

Mary Beth Lang, information officer for the Washington Department of Agriculture, was named first vice president. Tonda Ames, public information officer for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, was elected second vice president.

Brenda Hoffman, public information officer for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, was named secretary. Becky Walton, public information director for the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, was elected treasurer for a 3-year term. And, Suzanne Sorich, information officer for the Arizona Department of Agriculture, will be the newsletter editor.

Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Tommy Irvin addressed the assembled ag communicators, stressing the importance of communications in his administration. He said he isolated the Georgia information staff from budget cuts being imposed on the agriculture department and other state agencies.

The Georgia information staff arranged a visit to CNN television studios in Atlanta for the visiting ag communicators. The group also were shown how to improve their photography from award-winning photographer Emory Jones and were led through a mini-workshop on an effective strategy to win with all news media conducted by Pat Haggerty of the Alliance for a Clean Rural Environment.

Progressive Farmer editor Jack Odle talked about changes in farm magazine production. Dr. Hal Ricker, of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, reported on the status of developing organic food standards.

Lang reported on Washington State's successful Asian Gypsy Moth information program.

And, no COSDA program is complete without a day-long agricultural tour. The Georgia tour introduced the visiting ag communicators to the state's poultry (broiler), apple and wine industries, and the fall color of north Georgia's mountains.

The 1993 COSDA meeting will be held next autumn in Massachusetts.



## OKLAHOMA STUDY SHOWS VARIETY IN STATE AG INFORMATION ORGANIZATIONS, PLANS

A study by Tonda Ames, public information officer for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, shows a wide range in size and purpose of state agricultural department communication offices. This most likely is similar to the situation which could be found in a study of information offices at state land grant universities or at USDA agencies.

Ames polled all state departments of agriculture to see what she could learn about each state's ag communication plan, in preparation for a major effort to identify agricultural issues in Oklahoma and develop a communication plan to deal with the issues.

Twenty states responded to her survey. Ames developed a matrix summarizing the responses, which she distributed at the recent conference of Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture in Georgia.

Some state ag departments have a one-person information shop, while a couple have more than ten staff members. Several states have around five to seven people in their communications office.



Some offices spend most of their time dealing with the news media, including distributing news releases and producing radio programs. Some write speeches for the commissioner or director of agriculture.

Others do some publications, including the editing and production of monthly or weekly periodicals. For example, Georgia's weekly "Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin" is celebrating its 75th year with a free circulation to 250,000 subscribers.

Some staffs spend a lot of time working with state commodity organizations promoting farm products.

Ames said the study was helpful in developing a communication plan for Oklahoma's "AG 2000" report which was presented to the state's governor. Ames worked closely several months with the Oklahoma task force, appointed by the governor, which condensed more than 200 original statements of concern down to 35 major issues for the state.

The "Agricultural Awareness Committee" of the task force recommended the Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture coordinate development of a strategic plan with strong emphasis on educational and public information material for producers, ag related support industry and the ever growing urban population.

Copies of either the state ag information study results matrix or the "AG 2000" report are available from Tonda Ames, Public Information Officer, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, 2800 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105, or call (405) 521-3864; fax (405) 521-4912.



#### USDA'S AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK CONFERENCE '93 SPEECHES ON CID

From December 1-3, USDA will load speeches from its annual three-day outlook conference, "Agricultural Outlook '93," into USDA's CID Service.

This is a crucial time for farming. Many changes are going on in the world. During the conference, about 100 top analysts and researchers will gather at USDA to discuss what the changes are likely to mean in 1993 and the years ahead to farmers and people who rely on them.

Speakers will talk about trade relations, demands on natural resources, our changing society, long-term prospects for agriculture, the growing markets for value added farm products, climate change, food grains, farm labor, forest products outlook, the cotton outlook and much more.

Russell Forte and Denver Browning of OPA are working with WAOB Information Director Ray Bridge and Kent Miller of EMS and, of course, conference speakers, to get as many of the speeches as they can loaded into the CID Service. The CID Service is a national information distribution service.

All the speeches will be loaded into the "SPEECHES" category under USDA's Office of Public Affairs (OPA) menu. They'll be listed by subject matter. The number of lines each contains will be listed next to each speech.

The speeches will remain on the service for nine days.



**UPCOMING COMMUNICATION EVENTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

January 14-16, 1993:

NAGC 1992 NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SCHOOL

Old Colony Inn, Alexandria, Virginia

Contact: Debbie Trocchi, 703-519-3902

January 30 - February 3, 1993:

Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists Annual Conference

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Contact: 703-231-6295

April 8, 1993:

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS IN EDUCATION/OPA SPRING WORKSHOP

National 4-H Center, Chevy Chase, Maryland

Contact: Hank Becker, USDA ARS, 301-504-8547

May 8-12, 1993:

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS IN EDUCATION INTERNAT'L MEETING

Theme: "ACE '93, Discover New Worlds"

Hotel Intercontinental on Biscayne Bay, Miami, Florida

Contact: Donald Poucher, 904-392-0437 or Thomas Hintz, 904-392-5180

